

Flash Message: Region 10, , US Ecology Waste Disposal Facility Explosion (Grand View, Idaho) -- UPDATE #1

Monday, March 18, 2019 10:08 AM

Subject	Flash Message: Region 10, , US Ecology Waste Disposal Facility Explosion (Grand View, Idaho) -- UPDATE #1
From	Sheldrake, Beth
To	R10-ECL EMP
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US Environmental Protection Agency - Region 10  
Notification No.: **1230755**  
Flash Message: Region 10, US Ecology Waste Disposal Facility Explosion (Grand View, Idaho) -- **UPDATE #1**  
Report as of: **1700 PST, November 18, 2018**

**Overview:** At approximately 0915 Mountain Standard Time on November 17<sup>th</sup>, an explosion occurred at the US Ecology Subtitle C disposal facility in Grand View, Owyhee County, Idaho. The explosion took place in a building used to process magnesium powder. It was estimated that approximately 7,000 pounds of magnesium powder were present in the building. Magnesium is an alkali metal and reacts strongly when coming in contact with water although the exact cause of the explosion is not definitively known. The initial explosion was followed by a second explosion approximately an hour later. **Three** workers from the facility were **treated and released from a local hospital and one worker was killed.** The building where the magnesium was located was significantly damaged and the explosion caused damage to surrounding buildings, several of which reportedly contained flammable hazardous waste. Damage from the explosion compromised US Ecology's ability to access and provide definitive information on the chemical contents of the damaged and surrounding structures. There were no initial concerns about impacts to off-site air quality.

**State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions:** The Incident Commander with Owyhee County Sherriff's office requested assistance from a State-wide HazMat Team with decontamination of the injured workers so they can be admitted to the local hospital for treatment and recovery of the missing worker. Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) is providing technical assistance to the HazMat Team. **The Incident Commander and HazMat Team demobilized from the scene late Saturday evening after recovery of the fatally injured worker. The facility is regulated under the State of Idaho RCRA program.**

**EPA Actions:** EPA OSC Ball responded to the scene from Boise early on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, and formed a Unified Command with US Ecology. In addition to the reactive magnesium powder, the destroyed building also contained approximately 75 drums of flammable liquids. Just outside the destroyed building approximately 40 drums and totes of other hazardous wastes and almost 100 drums containing magnesium powder were staged awaiting treatment. A number of these drums and totes were damaged in the explosions.

Throughout the day Sunday, US Ecology gathered resources and formulated a plan to enter the impacted area starting Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. The operational objectives are to safely remove all drums and totes of hazardous waste from the impacted area. EPA START contractors are in route to assist with air monitoring and oversight of the operations.

The nearest population center (Grand View, Idaho) is approximately 10 miles away and there are some isolated rural residences approximately ½ mile from the US Ecology facility.

**Media Interest:** Moderate  
<https://www.ktvb.com/news/explosion-at-us-ecology-idaho-site-near-grand-view>  
<https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/article221871790.html>



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